

# Image Program Script

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## Introduction

The following slides will give you a brief introduction to some of the visual artists who became members of the Cornish Colony. Many of these artists formed close bonds. They shared similar training and experiences, especially European travel, during their formative years. They knew each other as teachers or in teacher/student relationships. It was no coincidence that they also shared artistic values. For the most part, they came to Cornish only during the summer months (there were a few exceptions). The landscape, climate, and rural life-style offered welcome relief from the noise, heat, and congestion of the city. Originally, they gathered around the dynamic personality of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, yet the Colony continued to flourish after the sculptor's death in 1907. The Colony earned an enviable reputation for its independent, hardworking artists, who balanced their professional pursuits with creative social gatherings. Although this script presents only a very few selected works from a limited number of visual artists, it includes a variety of media. We hope your interest will be stimulated to look into the life and works of other members of the Cornish Colony.

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## IMAGE 1- Roadside Plaque

The Cornish Colony (1885-1925) was a group of artists, sculptors, writers, journalists, poets, and musicians who joined the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens in Cornish and found the area a delightful place to live and work. Some prominent members were sculptor Herbert Adams, poet Percy MacKaye, architect Charles A. Platt, artists Kenyon Cox, Stephen Parrish, his son Maxfield, and landscape architects Rose Nichols and Ellen Shipman.

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## IMAGE 2- "Piping Pan," 1895-1901 by Louis St. Gaudens (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City)

This figure won the silver medal at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY, in 1901. When Augustus Saint-Gaudens came to Cornish that first summer of 1885, he brought with him some of his most talented assistants including Louis, his brother (six years younger), William MacMonnies, and Phillip Martiny. Each of these sculptors went on to renowned careers. These artists also became the nucleus of the Cornish Art Colony, which eventually numbered over seventy artists and included painters, writers, editors, actors, musicians, architects, public statesmen, and patrons of the arts. They were the "tastemakers" of the day and their work in the arts helped to shape the cultural climate of the United States.

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## IMAGE 3- "Adeline V. Pond," 1888 by Herbert Adams (The Hispanic Society of America, New York City)

Herbert Adams was a prolific sculptor who completed over 160 commissions, including six sets of bronze doors, full-size monuments honoring public figures, decorative sculpture on buildings, fountains, and numerous portraits. While he was a student in Paris he met his future wife, the author and critic Adeline Pond. He carved this marble bust, entered it in the Paris salon of 1888, and won professional recognition and praise. Even though this piece is executed in marble, Adams caught

an alert expression and a sparkle in the eye that suggests a lively, spontaneous personality. His treatment of the stone goes so far as to express soft flesh, natural hair, and transparent material. With this sculpture he set a new standard for exceptional beauty of form and finish. The couple was married in 1889 and spent the first of many summers in Cornish beginning around 1896. Adams' professional memberships included the Society of American Artists and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was President of the National Academy of Design, the National Sculpture Society, and the Saint-Gaudens Memorial from 1933 until his death in 1945.



**IMAGE 4- "Prometheus Fountain," 1934 by Paul Manship (Rockefeller Center, New York City)**

Paul Manship belonged to a slightly younger generation. His friends Charles Platt and Barry Faulkner, members of the Cornish Colony, invited him to Cornish. Manship spent summers here from 1915-17 (almost 10 years after the death of Augustus Saint-Gaudens). The story of Prometheus comes from Greek mythology. He was a Titan who created man from earth and water and whose most famous deed was to bring fire from heaven to humankind.



**IMAGE 5- "The End of the Trail," 1915 by James Earle Fraser**

James Earle Fraser created this sculpture for the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco. In this work Fraser tried to convey the utter despair of all American Indian tribes by representing the exhaustion of a warrior and his horse at the end of their journey. Many versions of this piece exist and may be seen in museums in New York City, Detroit, St. Louis, and Oklahoma City. Fraser became Saint-Gaudens' leading assistant in Cornish. One of Fraser's most famous works was his design for the Indian head or Buffalo nickel (in circulation from 1913 to 1938). He modeled numerous other commemorative medals.



**IMAGE 6- "First Steps," 1918 by William Zorach (Private Collection)**

William Zorach and his wife Marguerite came to Cornish in the summers of 1917-18. They were younger than many other Colony members and, perhaps, for this reason stayed only two seasons. Nevertheless, they found rural Cornish a good place to work and both the environment and the artistic community stimulated them. William began his very first efforts at three-dimensional sculpture with this work, after he observed his daughter take her first steps; prior to this, he had been a painter. Zorach continued to work in stone, wood, and bronze and to receive important commissions until his death in 1966.



**IMAGE 7- "Cornish Hills," 1890 by John White Alexander (Private Collection, New York City)**

Painters, too, found Cornish an inspiring place in which to work. Among the more than 30 painters who joined the Colony, almost every one was influenced by the landscape and especially by Mt. Ascutney, across the Connecticut River in Vermont. It is interesting to compare the different versions of the mountain painted by these artists. Alexander was primarily a mural painter and completed major commissions for the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, PA.



**IMAGE 8- "Moose Chase," 1888 by George deForest Brush (National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.)**

George deForest Brush is known for his idealized family portraits and for his scenes of Native American life. In the 1880's, Brush lived and painted out west among the Arapahoe, Shoshone, and Crow Indian tribes. Some of the artist's most eloquent canvases come from his observations of Indian life such as this scene of a moose chase. When Brush spent summers in Cornish, he lived in a teepee at the foot of Saint-Gaudens' meadow.



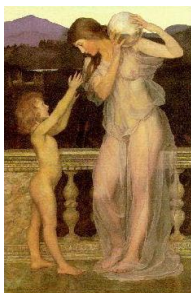
**IMAGE 9- "Augustus Saint Gaudens," 1887 by Kenyon Cox (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City)**

Kenyon Cox, nationally known as a muralist, a painter of landscapes and portraits, as well as an art critic and teacher, spent over 20 seasons in Cornish. This portrait shows Saint-Gaudens creating a bas-relief portrait of another artist and friend, William Merritt Chase (1849-1916).



**IMAGE 10- "Landscape with Figures," 1890 by Thomas Dewing (National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.)**

Thomas Dewing was one of the first painters to follow Saint-Gaudens to Cornish. Dewing has been called a "pictorial poet." He is especially known for his paintings of women placed in locally inspired and atmospheric landscapes. In this imaginary "landscape with figures" it is most certainly the profile of Mt. Ascutney which is seen in the distance.



**IMAGE 11- "Illusions," 1900-01 by Henry B. Fuller (National Museum of American Art, Washington D.C.)**

Henry B. Fuller came to Cornish with his wife around 1897. They were both professional painters. This is one of the works for which he is best known and he painted this while living in Cornish. The theme, which is somewhat enigmatic, may represent a youthful quest for knowledge and life's illusions, reflected in the fragile sphere, are withheld to preserve childhood innocence. Mt. Ascutney is clearly silhouetted in the background.



**IMAGE 12- "Willows in March," 1911 by Willard Metcalf (Smith College Museum, Northampton, Massachusetts)**

Unlike most other Colony artists, who mainly spent summers in Cornish, Willard Metcalf preferred the winter months. He was in Cornish from 1909-1920 and painted more than a thousand canvases of New England landscapes. In this locally inspired scene, Metcalf captures the feathery silhouettes of trees in an almost monochromatic color scheme. He was a member of "The Ten" which was a group of American Impressionist painters.



**IMAGE 13- "Thy Templed Hills," 1942 by Maxfield Parrish (Chittenden Bank, Windsor, Vermont)**

Maxfield Parrish is perhaps the most widely known artist from the Cornish Colony. He came to the area in 1898 and lived here, year round, until his death in 1966. He was a man of many talents: a machinist, a painter, and an illustrator. His work was seen in books, magazines, on calendars, and was used in advertisements for Jell-O, Edison Mazda Light Bulbs, Fiske Tires, and Oneida Silver plate companies. At one time it is said that every fourth household in America had a copy of a Parrish painting. Some of his favorite subject matter was drawn from the local landscape as well as from his imagination. Parrish developed a method of applying his paint in "glazes," which resulted in very intense colors, notably "Parrish blue." In 1942, this painting was used as the top for a calendar.



**IMAGE 14- "The Declaration of Independence," 1936 by Barry Faulkner**

Mural paintings were a popular art form of the era. They provided architectural decoration, as well as instruction. Here, Faulkner painted the backdrop for the Declaration of Independence, located in the rotunda of the National Archives building, on the mall in Washington, D.C. Faulkner painted a companion panel that is above the Constitution of the United States. To provide factual accuracy, he researched, in-depth, correct period clothing and portraits of the participating historic figures. These large murals, 14' x 36', were unveiled in 1936 and still provide a dignified setting for these two documents. Other Cornish Colony muralists include John White Alexander, John Elliot, Lucia Fairchild Fuller, and Maxfield Parrish.



**IMAGE 15- Freer Gallery of Art, 1913 by Charles Platt, opened 1923**

Another noted member of the Cornish Colony was Charles Platt. His professional career encompassed a number of different media, which included etching, painting, landscape design, and architecture. His designs were strongly influenced by the Italian Renaissance period. Platt's architecture set the standard for country estates and he built many for wealthy industrialists. More publicly visible is this building, the Freer Gallery, located on the Mall in Washington, D.C., designed to contain the art collection of the industrialist Charles Freer.





**IMAGE 16- "Arvia MacKaye," 1906 by Louise Cox (Private collection)**

Cornish Colony members included notable female artists, writers, illustrators, and landscape designers. Louise Cox, wife of Kenyon Cox, was known as a portrait painter and considered to be in the foremost rank of American artists. She painted many of the Colony children. Arvia MacKaye, the subject of this painting, was the daughter of Colony poet Percy MacKaye. Louise's work was published nationally when she did a series of children representing the seasons for the covers of *The Woman's Home Companion*. During the summers spent in Cornish, Louise also became an avid gardener and was active in children's theater. She designed the costumes for a children's production of Thackeray's, *The Rose and the Ring*. Throughout her career she received many awards (a bronze medal at the great Paris Exposition of 1900 and silver medals at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo and the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition). She was also a member of the prestigious Society of American Artists.



**IMAGE 17- "Louise E. Dupont," c. 1894 by Lucia Fairchild Fuller (Hagley Museum, Wilmington, Delaware)**

Lucia Fairchild Fuller began her extremely successful painting career as a muralist, but soon switched to portraiture. Instead of large, traditional canvasses, she chose to paint miniatures. The painting of small portraits came into vogue at the end of the 19th century. The challenge for the miniature painter was to capture the image and personality of the subject within the small dimensions of a piece of ivory, usually no bigger than 6"x4," and often much smaller. This demanded a penetrating eye and a sure hand. Miniatures were frequently set into medallions, boxes or jewelry that could be carried as a memento. Lucia was a founding member of the American Society of Miniature Painters in 1899(President in 1913) and was a member of the National Academy of Design in 1906.



**IMAGE 18- "Girl by a Pool," 1913 by Frances Grimes (Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio)**

This bronze fountain figure was done in 1913 and a marble version is in the Brookgreen Gardens in South Carolina. Frances Grimes studied with Cornish Colony artist Herbert Adams and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and became one of the sculptor's most trusted assistants. She completed several of Saint-Gaudens' commissions after his death. She was proficient in drawing and modeling as well as in carving. Frances Grimes was a member of the National Sculpture Society, National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, and the National Academy of Design.




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**IMAGE 19- Untitled, n.d. by Edith Prellwitz**

Edith Mitchell was a serious painter before she met her artist husband, Henry Prellwitz. She once wrote in her diary, "I am a woman of aspiration, with...strong intentions to...become an artist, a great artist." Edith and Henry married in 1894 and that same year began summering in Cornish. Edith won many prizes for her work and used the proceeds of the Dodge Prize, from the National Academy of Design, to build a summer cottage in Cornish. Edith did many locally inspired canvases like this one of a grove of trees under a turbulent sky.




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**IMAGE 20- Detail of "Bed of Poppies," 1909 by Maria Dewing (Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts)**

Gardening became a passion of many Colony members and Maria Dewing is credited with starting the movement because she painted flowers. The fame of Cornish gardens spread nationwide due to articles featuring their gardens, written for popular magazines like *Century*, *House & Garden*, *Country Life in America*, and *Suburban Life*. Maria and her husband, Thomas, were one of many professional artist couples to spend their summers in Cornish. She spent hours in her garden studying the textures and growing patterns. In this painting Maria composed a close-up view of the poppies. She created the illusion of great space by painting an asymmetrical arrangement and having the floral subjects continue beyond the picture frame. An art reviewer remarked, "She gives us their character, their special texture, their special droop. She paints, literally, their portraits."




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**IMAGE 21- "The Terrace," 1913 by Ellen Axson Wilson**

President Woodrow Wilson brought the summer White House to Cornish in 1913 and Ellen, his wife, was delighted because she found a very compatible community. Ellen had studied painting and resumed it, years later, as a student at the Old Lyme Art Colony in Connecticut. In Cornish, she resumed lessons with her former mentor, Robert Vonnob.

She was inspired by the New Hampshire countryside and completed five known canvases; including "The Terrace" (four remain unlocated). This view is taken from the balcony of their rented home, "Harlakenden" and looks down the Connecticut River towards Mt. Ascutney. She was primarily a landscape painter. She worked in an impressionist style reflected in her loosely applied paint that captures a sense of place, time of day, and atmosphere. Before a premature death, Ellen also began the White House rose garden.

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**IMAGE 22- Illustration from *Coniston* by Florence Shinn**

Florence Scovel Shinn enjoyed a distinguished career as an illustrator. She studied at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts where she met her future husband, the artist Everett Shinn. They married in 1898 and settled in New York City where their careers in the theater and interior decoration put them on the cutting edge of artistic and social circles. Before photography was common, the art of the illustrator was in constant demand to record events in newspapers, journals, and books. Florence was among the best, respected for her perception of character, her sincerity, wit, and her sensitivity to human feelings. She illustrated articles for many publications such as *Town and Country*, *Woman's Home Journal*, *Harper's*, and *Century*. The Shinns joined the Colony around 1902.




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**IMAGE 23- \$20 dollar gold coin (obverse) by Augustus Saint-Gaudens**

We tend to overlook the fact that coins and medals are a form of sculpture. They are modeled in low relief and often incorporate inscriptions or wording in the over-all design. In 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt commissioned Saint-Gaudens to design the \$10 and \$20 gold coins, known as the *Eagle* and *Double Eagle* respectively. This marked the first time an artist was commissioned to design a coin for official United States currency (heretofore, this job was given to engravers of the U. S. mint). Due to his illness, Saint-Gaudens was unable to complete the commission, and asked his assistant, Henry Hering, to carry through with the project following his designs. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the coins struck. They were minted in late 1907 after the sculptor's death. The "Walking Liberty" design with a striding classical figure carrying a torch and olive branch has been called one of the most beautiful coins ever produced in America. Five other assistants of Saint-Gaudens were subsequently commissioned to model coins including: James Earle Fraser designed the *Buffalo nickel* and Adolph Weinman designed the *Mercury dime* and the *Walking Liberty half-dollar*. Coin collecting is a popular hobby. When the United States went "off the gold standard," in 1934, the Saint-Gaudens gold coins were no longer produced and they became a highly desirable collector's item.




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**IMAGE 24- Garden at Saint-Gaudens NHS by Ellen Shipman**

Ellen Shipman's artistic talent took her in a different direction. She became a noted landscape designer who completed over 600 gardens between 1914 and 1946. She first came to Cornish with her husband, the playwright Louis Evan Shipman, and their three children in 1893. After their marriage ended in divorce, it became necessary for her to support the family. A neighbor, the architect Charles Platt, recognized her talent and trained her in design principles. From this point on, Ellen's career flourished. She accepted commissions spanning the country, from the states of Washington and Maine, Ohio and Louisiana. After Saint-Gaudens died, the Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial hired Ellen, in 1928 and again in 1941, to revive the gardens at the Historic Site. Distinctive features of Ellen's gardens were flower borders filled with masses of plantings. She was an active advocate for women in the

landscape design profession and ran an all-woman business. In 1933, *House & Garden* selected her for its Hall of Fame.